



## MINUTES

### MERCHANTVILLE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Borough Hall, 1 West Maple Avenue, Merchantville, NJ 08109

Tuesday, October 1, 2019, 7:30pm

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Ms. McLoone called the order at 7:30pm. She explained how notice has been provided in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** All persons present at the meeting stood for the pledge allegiance.

### 3. ROLL CALL

Class C	Class B	Class C	Class A	Class C	Class C, Alt.	Class C, Alt.
Regina Lovelidge	Maureen McLoone	Jennifer Taylor	Shawn Waldron	Nathan Weiner	R. Taylor Ruilova	
Absent	X	X	X*	X	X	

\* Mr. Waldron arrived a few minutes into the meeting. Ms. Wuebker and Mr. Asselta, HPC Attorney, were also present.

### 4. OLD BUSINESS

#### a. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mr. Ruilova made a motion to approve the September 5, 2019 minutes; the motion was seconded by Ms. Taylor. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

b. **Certificates of Appropriateness.** Ms. McLoone provided Ms. Wuebker with Certificates of Approval for the following matters:

HPC#1909-1 Charles Hummel of Azimuth Renewable Energy & Ryan Middleton,  
21 N Centre Street, Block 58, Lot 11, Rooftop Solar Photovoltaic System

HPC#1909-2 Saleemah Smith, A Milli Little Things  
19 S Centre Street, Block 29, Lot 12, Storefront signage

### 5. NEW BUSINESS

#### a. Public Meeting

HPC# 1910-1 Lauren Bell, Merchant House, 24 S Centre Street, Bl 22, Lot 26  
Restaurant signage and front door

The property owner, Lauren Bell, and her architect, Kim Dechen, were sworn in. The proposed restaurant tenant, Patti Sharp, was also in attendance. The applicant proposes the following changes to the exterior of the structure: to replace the Merchantville diner building façade sign, conduct minor roof repair, scrape and repaint peeling paint, repaint existing overhanging sign post, replace existing overhanging sign, and would also like to install 'take out' sign on the south side of the rear of the building.

Mr. Asselta initiated the discussion of each proposed sign separately.

Building Face Sign. The proposed “Merchant House” building face sign that is 1’ x 7’6” meets the allowable size requirements in the Zoning Ordinance.

Overhanging Sign. The proposed perpendicular overhanging 3’ x 2’ sign meets the allowable size requirements (of no more than 6 square feet) and meets the minimum distance between the ground and the bottom of the sign (of no less than 9 feet). However, the proposed sign will be extending beyond the 3’ allowed from the front plane of the building. The applicant proposes to reuse the existing support for the overhanging sign, but if the Board would like her to remove the existing support and replace with a new more attractive one, she is willing to do that. Board members discussed the grandfathering of the existing structural framework and that if it is removed, the applicant will not be able to meet the ordinance requirements with its proposed sign, due to the roof canopy on the building. The Applicant is agreeable to whatever the Board prefers. Board members felt it would make sense for her to keep the existing structural framework so that it would not trigger the need for a variance and would not cause her to expend additional funds to replace it with a new one. She will repaint the existing structural framework and will move the signage in so it is not on the outermost point of the structural arm.

Overhanging ‘Take Out’ Sign. The sign is proposed near the rear of the property to direct customers to the appropriate door for take-out food. The ordinance has restrictions about the location of signs and number of overhanging signs. It was discussed that HPC could take the position that a variance is required from the Joint Land Use Board, but that the HPC would relay their support for the application. Ms. Wuebker informed the Board that the alley is likely going to be used as a public space for outdoor dining and that pedestrians will be using it so it may be meeting the ‘public entrance’ intent of ordinance. Board members discussed how the ‘take out’ sign, in this particular context, is in the nature of a directional sign, the purpose of which is to direct pedestrians to the correct door, rather than to advertise take-out services generally. The Board doesn’t typically include directional signs, like ‘in/out,’ in its analysis. Board also discussed Council’s recent amendment to the Ordinance that allows commercial informational signs without sign permit review.

Front Doors. Board members asked about the proposed door replacement and lighting fixture also shown in the packet. The applicant is proposing a door very similar to what already exists because they didn’t want to cause any unnecessary concern by proposing something different than what already exists on the building. A Board member expressed that it would be better to improve the appearance with a commercial-style door, rather than the residential colonial style door. As such, the Applicant amended its application to request to replace the door, either in kind as proposed in the application packet, or with a full pane glass door.

Lighting. There will be no internal illumination of signs. An exterior light fixture is proposed for the take-out sign in the rear of the alley, but they also anticipate installing café-style lighting in the alley to create a warm and inviting ‘twinkle’ atmosphere.

Mr. Waldron made a motion to approve the following items: a new 2 x 3 overhanging sign on the existing, but repainted bracket with sign colors as submitted in the application package; a new 12” x 7’6” building face sign, as well as the proposed 2’6” x 2’6” take out sign in the alley as a directional/informational sign to guide people to the rear entrance, and a full pane glass door, or the door as submitted, with no interior illumination of signage. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ruilova. All members present voted in favor of the application.

The Applicant, Mr. Medina, and his attorney, Ms. Shereen Chen Gray, were sworn in. Ms. Gray indicated it has been a long journey for the restaurant to open up. She is trying to assist Mr. Medina. The Applicant is proposing to replace the sign that currently exists with a 3.06' x 8.05 "La Guadalupana" sign with the colors and design as shown in the application packet. It will be the same size as the sign that is there. There will be no internal illumination. Mr. Waldron stated there are goose neck lights there now. The sign proposal also shows the street address in the transom of the window. A board member questioned the address as Park Avenue because the building fronts on Cove Road, but Ms. Wuebker believes that is the correct address. There is no other signage proposed.

Mr. Weiner made a motion to approve the sign application, as submitted. Ms. Waldron seconded the motion. All those present voted in favor of the application.

## **7. PROFESSIONAL & BOARD COMMENTS**

Ms. McLoone provided an update on the installation of Collins & Pancoast Hall sign along the multi-use path. A new sign will be installed by the former train station in the future and it is hoped that there will be another one for the Collins Tract and the Centennial house thereafter. Ms. Wuebker advised that she is working on the master plan reexamination report. There is a section in the Reexamination report that recommends Council adopt sign ordinance amendments, particularly with regard to clearing up any inconsistencies in the ordinance and relaxing some ordinance restrictions that are reasonable repeat requests by applicants, such as for sign bands and allowing one sign on the door and on one window for each building facade. Now only can have one or the other. When it comes to drafting the sign ordinance, she will confer with HPC.

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Ruilova made a motion to adjourn the meeting that was seconded by Mr. Waldron.